

HOLIDAY FIRE PREVENTION

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Each year, fires that occur in the United States during the holiday season, injure 2,000 individuals and cause over \$500 million in damage. There are simple life-saving steps you can take to ensure a safe and happy holiday. By following some of the outlined precautionary tips listed below, individuals can greatly reduce their chances of becoming a holiday fire casualty.

HOLIDAY TREE FIRE HAZARDS

Special fire safety precautions need to be taken when keeping a tree in the house. A burning tree can rapidly fill a room with fire and deadly gases.

SELECTING A TREE FOR THE HOLIDAY

Needles on fresh trees should be green and hard to pull back from the branches. Needles should not break if the tree has been freshly cut. The trunk on a fresh tree is sticky to the touch. Old trees can be identified by bouncing the tree trunk on the ground. If many needles fall, the tree has probably dried out and is considered a fire hazard.

CARING FOR YOUR TREE

Do not place your tree close to a heat source, including a fireplace or heat vent. Heat will dry out the tree, causing it to be more easily ignited by heat, flame or sparks. Be careful not to drop or flick cigarette ashes near a tree. Do not put your live tree up too early or leave it up for longer than two weeks. Keep the tree stand filled with water at all times. Consider using a potted tree.

DISPOSING OF YOUR TREE

Never put tree branches or needles in a fireplace or wood burning stove. When the tree becomes dry, dispose of it promptly. The best way to dispose your tree is by taking it to a recycling center or having it hauled away by a community pickup service. For information on tree disposal sites, call **888-CLEAN-LA**.

| MAINTAIN YOUR HOLIDAY LIGHTS

Inspect holiday lights each year for frayed wires, bare spots, gaps in the insulation, broken or cracked sockets, and excessive kinking or wear before putting them up. Use only lighting listed by an approved testing laboratory. If there is any question as to the integrity of your lights, replace them with a new set of lights.

DO NOT OVERLOAD ELECTRICAL OUTLETS

Follow the directions on the light sets when connecting your lights. Connect lights to an extension cord before plugging the cord into the outlet. Make sure to periodically check the wires - they should not be warm to the touch. Do not leave holiday lights on while unattended.

USE ONLY NONFLAMMABLE DECORATIONS

All decorations should be nonflammable or flame retardant and placed away from heat vents.

NEVER PUT WRAPPING PAPER IN A FIREPLACE

Wrapping paper can produce dangerous sparks and a chemical buildup in the home that could cause an explosion.

ARTIFICIAL HOLIDAY TREES

If you are using a metallic or artificial tree, make sure it is flame retardant.

AVOID USING LIT CANDLES

If you do use them, make sure they are in stable holders and place them where they cannot be easily knocked down. Never leave the house with candles burning.

KEEP YOUR KITCHEN APPLIANCES CLEAN

Grease build-up can cause a stove fire.

NEVER PUT LIT CANDLES ON A TREE

Do not go near a holiday tree with an open flame - candles, lighters or matches.

Finally, as in every season, have working smoke alarms installed on every level and in every room of your home. Test smoke detectors monthly and keep them clean and equipped with fresh batteries at all times. Know when and how to call for help. Practice your home escape plan.